TU Delft
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Open Practice Discussion on Online Social Elements in Education - What Worked or Didn't Work in the Past Year

Abstract

In this interactive open practices session, you will be able to share out what worked and didn't work in online/remote, hybrid, and Blended Learning (BL) formats in your organization. You will complete a poll with questions about what type of online social elements do you (or your organization) add to a course. With the poll results, we will share out what common online social elements are currently being used. After that we will have an open discussion on where you hope to be with online student engagement in the next year and discuss what steps could be taken to get to your goal. Results from the polls and documents will be utilized amongst open practitioners in the Digitel Pro project and materials created will be shared out as OER.

Extended abstract

Throughout the past year with remote teaching across the globe due to COVID, it has been noted that connecting and engaging students is an essential aspect in learning in online environments which is a crucial condition to promote the uptake of OER or open pedagogy models. An online course takes time to create and blended learning can help an instructor slowly build towards a robust online course. Initial support this past year for remote teaching involved immediate support for webinar and live classroom tools, followed by support for creating video lectures from home. Focusing on engaging students came later after on campus students reported a lack of connection with peers and with their programmes.

This interactive session focuses on the interaction dimension of online education to encourage student engagement which includes student-student interactions, teacher-student interactions, and student-content interactions. This session will involve polling the audience to see what online social elements are currently being used in their courses and then there will be an open discussion on what worked and didn't work for them, particularly in the past year. Some of the online social elements included in the poll will be: icebreakers, social café or lounge, group work, interactive collaboration, synchronous group work, group work such as quests in game-based learning, scavenger hunts, sequencing activities, non-text based discussions, selection of BL tools, etc.

Following the open discussion, there will be a poll asking what online social elements they hope to use in the future. During the discussion, a list of the suggested online social elements will be created as a result of the online discussion. The discussion will include asking the audience about common scenarios at their universities. Also, a document will be created with best practices described during the open discussion and other notes which will be made available to all and will be under an open license. Because this interactivity is focused on connecting and engaging students, some of the online asynchronous social elements will be utilized to help the audience experience planned social elements.

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The Digitel Pro project involves universities in the Netherlands, France, Spain, Italy, Ireland, and EADTU and has 3 main parts: to explore educational needs, exchange expertise through open practices, and to design continuing education courses under open licenses, thus this project exemplifies how to nurture the creation of OER and learning activity modules that can be utilized in various settings. This 2 year project involves 3 course formats: online/remote, hybrid, and blended learning (BL), thus the poll and discussion will include all 3 course formats. The partner university offering this interactive session is developing the continuing professional course for Blended Learning, thus this session will highlight blended learning, but also include other course formats.

This session will show how to collaboratively interact with international peers in an open discussion as a form of open practices. The results of the polls and the documents created will be utilized in the DigitelPro project connected with EADTU as an open practices collaboration across several European universities following the EMBED project to determine which social activities are currently being used and which still need further guidance. Part of the Digitel Pro project includes case scenarios of current situations and what solutions there are for the scenarios, which can be informed from the polls. Results and materials from the Digitel Pro project will be published as OER.